



Loebsack speaks about stimulus

By MATT MILNER Courier staff writer

February 18, 2009 11:46 pm

— OTTUMWA — U.S. Rep. Dave Loebsack said the stimulus bill just signed by President Barack Obama fell short of the jobs targets he hoped for, but that its passage was too important to delay.

"We needed it because of the economic situation. Clearly we needed something not just to save jobs but to create jobs," Loebsack said during a visit to Ottumwa Wednesday.

Loebsack put the legislation's target at 3.5 million to 3.75 million jobs. He preferred a version that aimed for 4 million jobs. Some of the funding is discretionary, including \$14 billion for school modernization. The language allows the money to go for modernization, while Loebsack pressed for a requirement that the funding go to schools.

The legislation is the largest single bill ever passed by Congress, and Loebsack conceded he doesn't know every detail.

"I know the major elements and the specific points that are critical for Iowa," he said, pointing to energy spending and funds for renewable energy development. "I knew what I needed to know to vote for the bill." The spending stretches out over the next two years, a concession Loebsack said recognizes that not every project the bill will fund is ready to go. Loebsack believes the country will largely recoup the \$787 billion price tag as people go back to work and contribute to the economy.

Loebsack criticized Republican complaints that the bill contained too much pork and too little stimulus.

"There's no pork in this bill," he said. "There were things that were not stimulative. Those things have been removed."

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